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Firearms, Ballistics & Shooting Incident Reconstruction *We Bring Truth to Light*

Forensic Analysis & Reconstruction

Equivocal Death Analysis: Death of Christian Andreacchio

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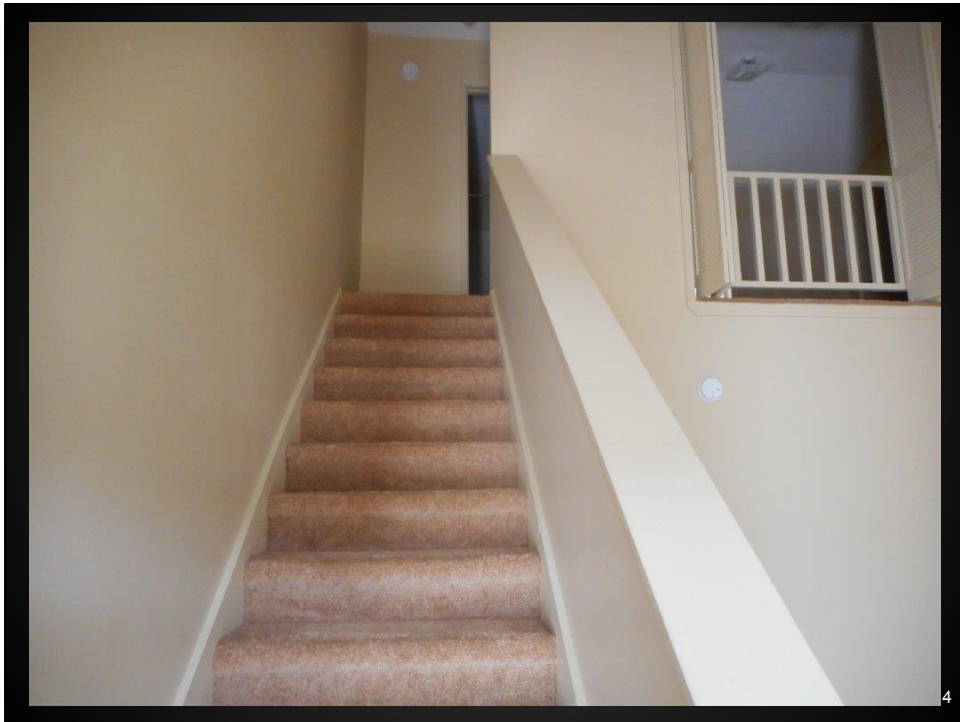
Crime Scene



Crime Scene Photograph 021.jpg:

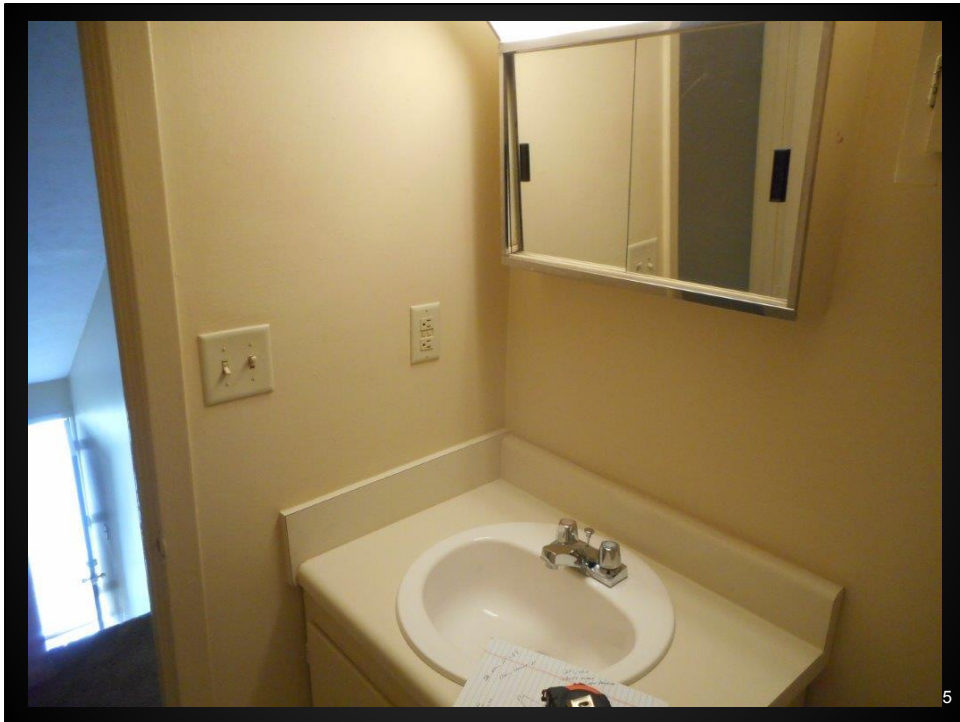
On Wednesday, February 26, 2014, at approximately 4:45 p.m., officers with the Meridian Police Department were dispatched to a reported suicide at the Willow Ridge Apartments, 801 Deer Run, Meridian, Mississippi.

Officers found Christian Andreacchio in the upstairs bathroom face down with his waist resting on the side of the tub, upper torso inside the tub and the lower extremities outside the tub.



Photograph of Exemplar Bathroom:

Det. Bratu with the Meridian Police Department went to the apartment complex and entered an exemplar apartment. The exemplar apartment was a mirror image (symmetric reversal) of the actual crime scene in apartment 801.



Photograph of Exemplar Bathroom:

The bathroom was located at the top of the staircase next to a loft bedroom. The location of the electrical outlet was documented in relation to the vanity.



Photograph of Exemplar Bathroom:

The location of the bathroom fixtures in the exemplar bathroom were a mirror image to the actual bathroom scene in apartment 801.

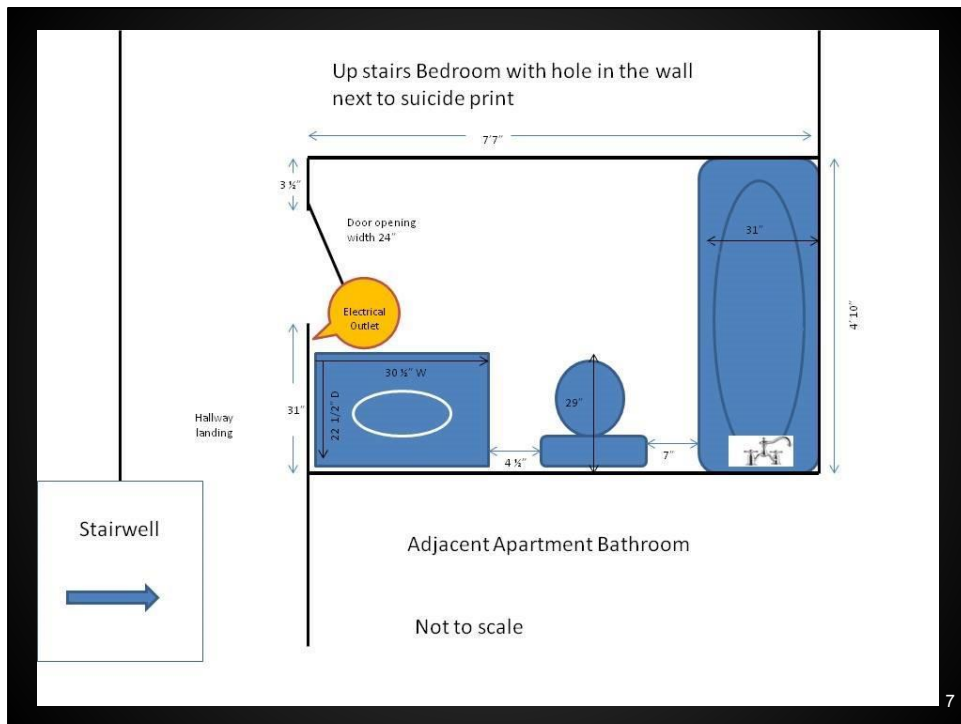


Diagram of Bathroom in Apartment 801:

Det. Bratu with the Meridian Police Department also used the exemplar bathroom to obtain the measurements of the actual bathroom.

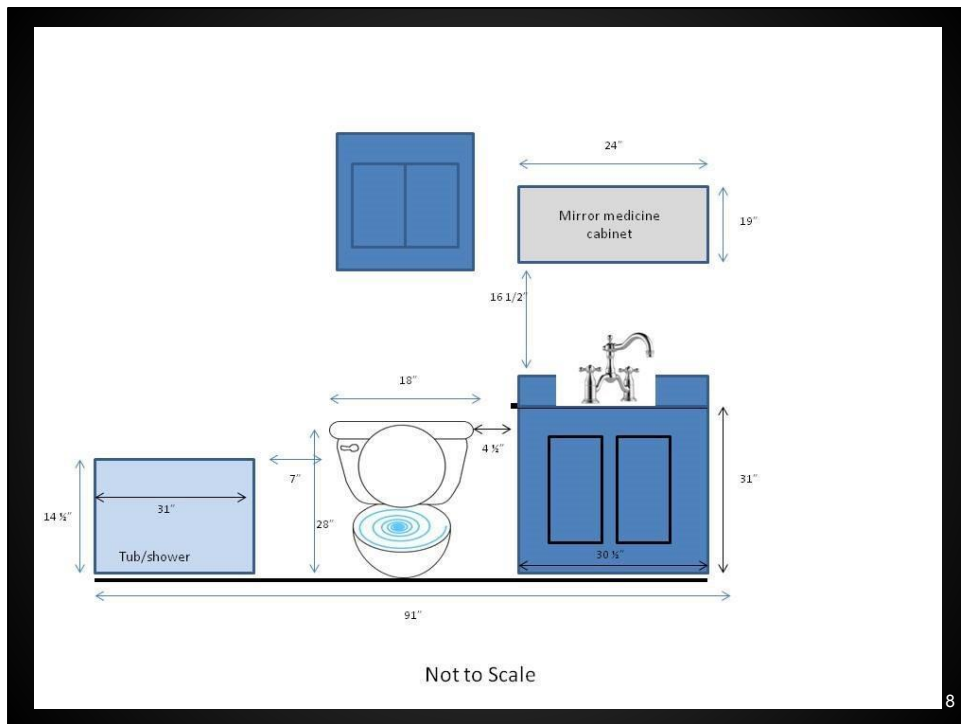


Diagram of Bathroom in Apartment 801:

This elevation view diagram depicts the heights of the bathtub, toilet, and vanity.

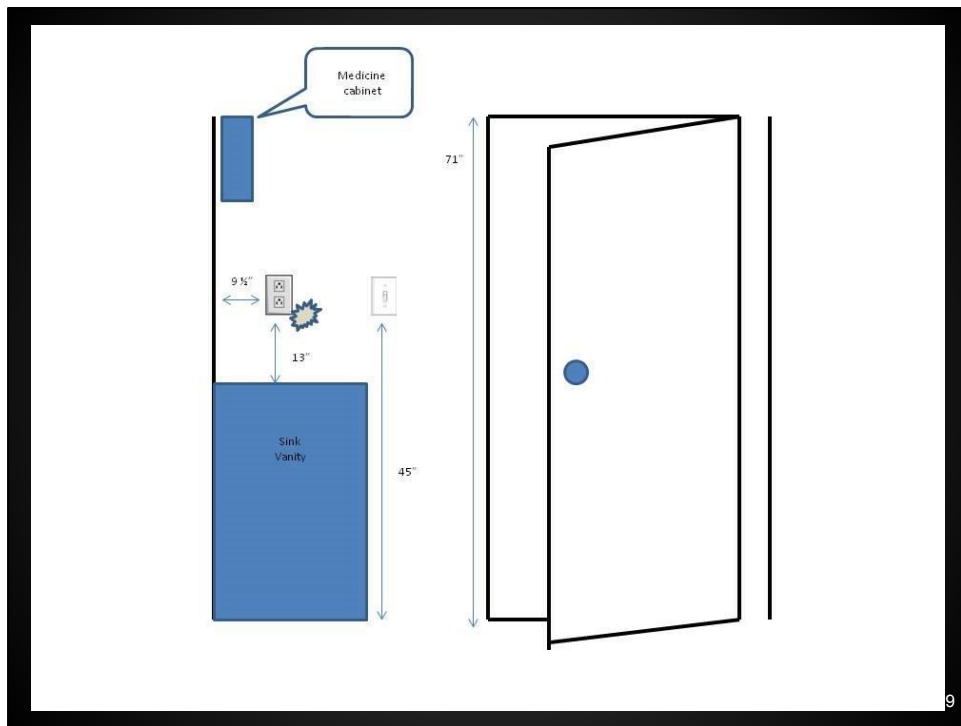
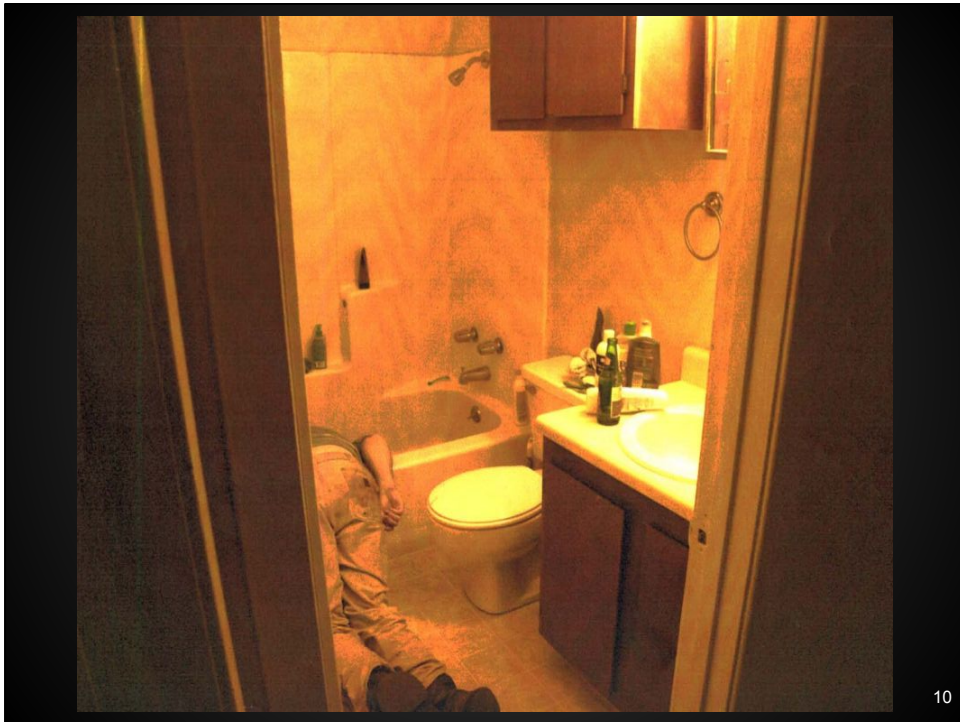


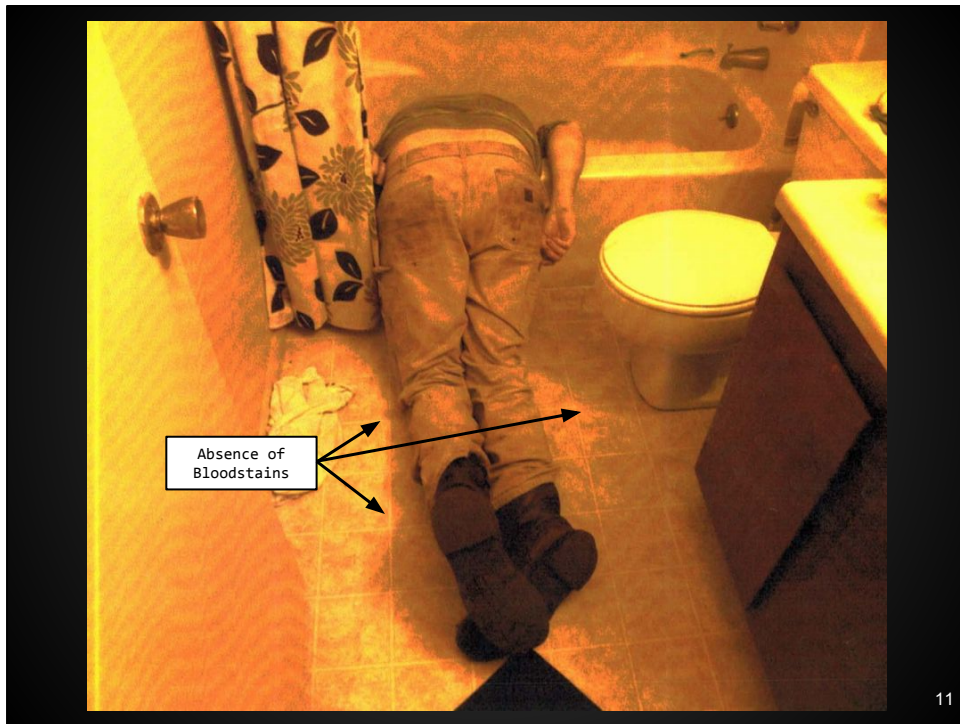
Diagram of Bathroom in Apartment 801:

An elevation view diagram depicting the location of the electrical outlet above the vanity.



PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

Christian Andreacchio was found deceased in the second floor bathroom.



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PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

The upper torso of Andreacchio was found inside the bathtub with his arms parallel to the body. There were no obvious indications of bloodstain evidence on the bathroom floor or bathroom fixtures.



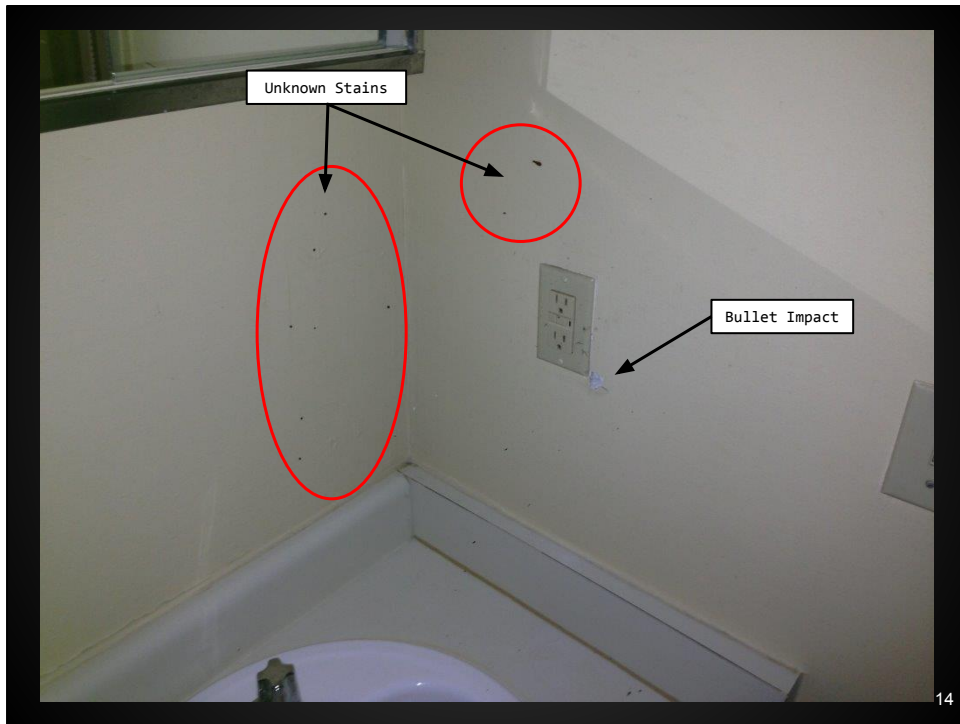
Crime Scene Photograph 010.jpg:

There were no visible bloodstains on either the bathroom floor or bathroom fixtures.



Crime Scene Photograph 023.jpg:

Andreacchio was wearing a hooded shirt.



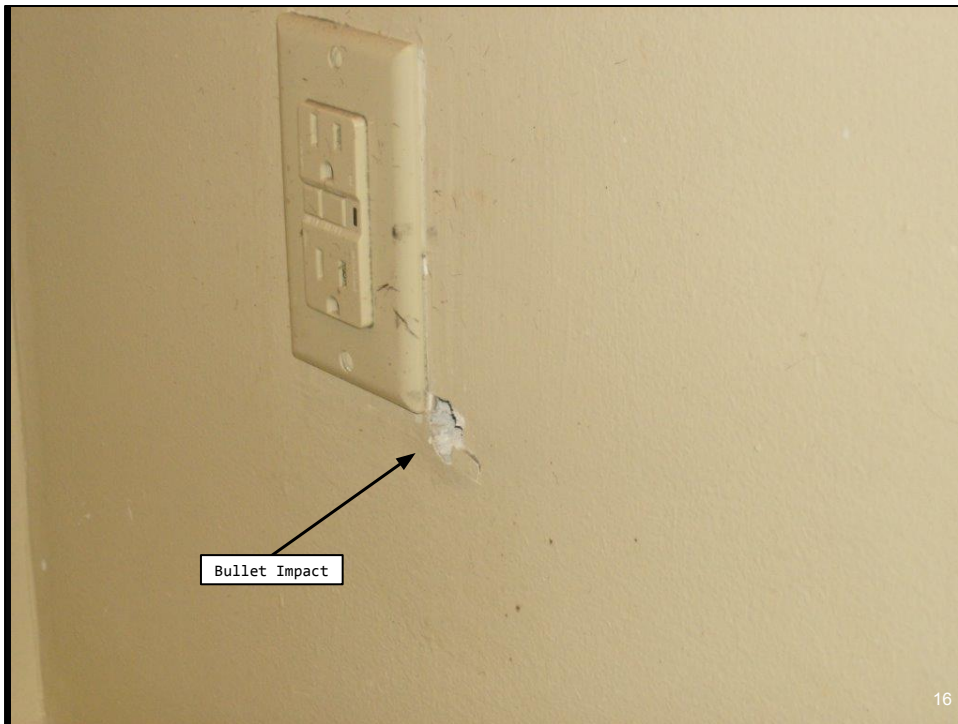
Crime Scene Photograph 3.jpg:

There was a bullet impact defect on the wall to the right side of the vanity. There were also unknown stains, consistent in appearance, size, and behavior with impact bloodstain patterns, on the wall behind the sink/vanity and to the right side of the sink.



Cropped Image of Crime Scene Photograph 3.jpg:

The unknown stains were not examined at the scene to determine direction; however, the large stain above the electrical outlet appeared to be traveling right to left with a slight upward angle when it impacted the wall, and the surrounding smaller stains appear to be close to circular, which means that they impact nearly perpendicularly to the wall. It is apparent from the photograph that the source of the blood was in close proximity to the electrical receptacle at the time that the blood was deposited. However, without an on-scene analysis to determine impact angles and locate the area of origin, location of the blood source can only be known generally.



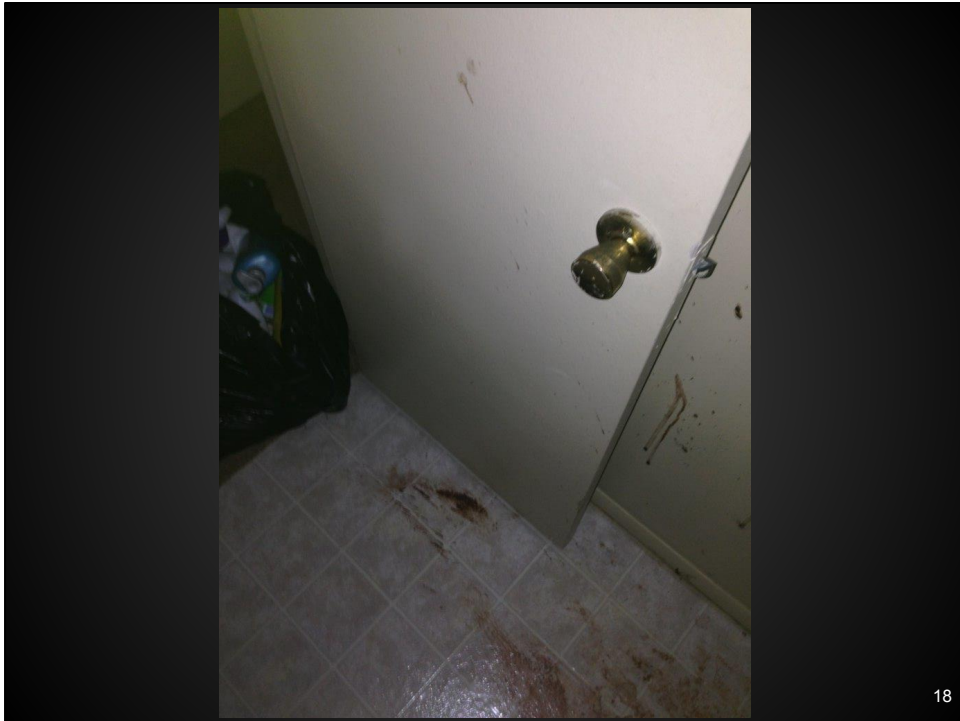
Crime Scene Photograph 011.jpg:

There was a bullet impact defect on the wall to the right of the sink and next to the electrical outlet.



Crime Scene Photograph 13.jpg:

This blurry photograph appears to depict the projectile in the blood inside the bathtub.



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Crime Scene Photograph 5 (1).jpg:

There were bloodstains on the exterior side of the bathroom door and the wall behind the door. The transfer stains on the bathroom floor were not present when police first arrived. They appear to have been created when the body was removed from the bathroom.

Dylan Swearingen, a friend of Andreacchio, told police he came back from Best Buy and did not see Andreacchio, so he went upstairs. Swearingen wrote that he “noticed the bathroom light was on so [Swearingen] figured [Andreacchio] was taking a shower. Swearingen knocked and asked, “Are you alright?” (Written Statement of Dylan Swearingen, p. 3). Swearingen did not receive a response so he left. He went back to the bathroom a short time later, knocked again, but did not receive an answer, so he opened the door and saw Andreacchio “laying face down across the tub” (Written Statement of Dylan Swearingen, p. 3).



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Crime Scene Photograph 1 (2).jpg:

There was what appeared to be impact blood spatter on the bottom, exterior side of the bathroom door. There was also blood spatter on the wall behind the bathroom door.



Cropped Image of Crime Scene Photograph 1 (2).jpg:

The impact spatter on the bottom of the bathroom door was traveling right to left and upward. There was also impact spatter on the wall behind the door. There was an area void of blood on the wall. The bathroom door was open at the time the blood was deposited.



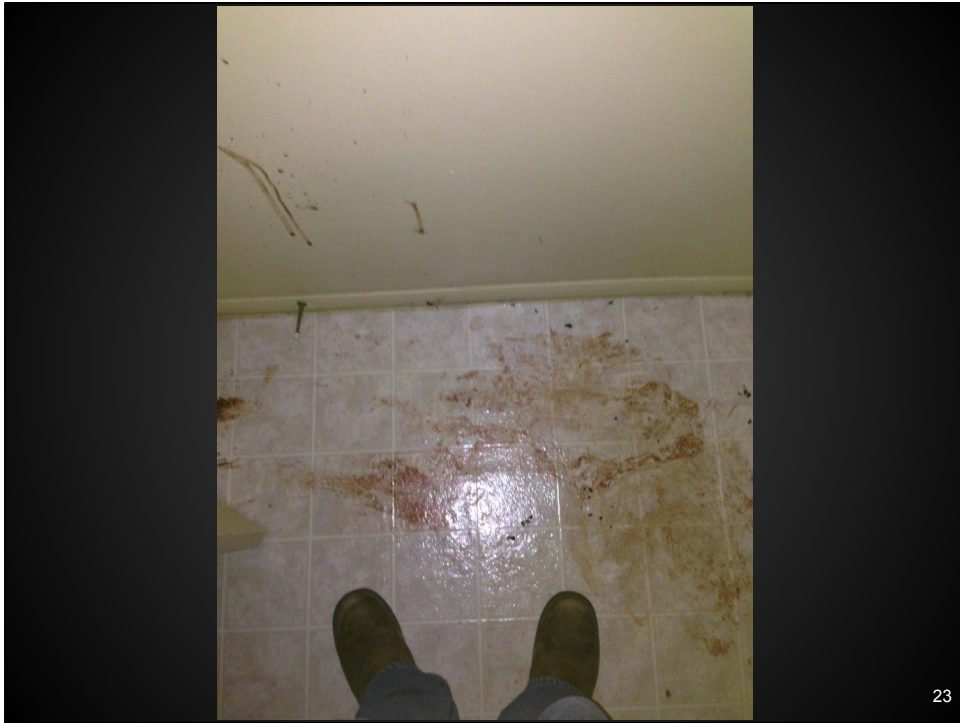
Cropped Image of Crime Scene Photograph 1 (2).jpg:

The impact spatter on the bottom of the bathroom door was traveling right to left and upward.



Crime Scene Photograph 7.jpg:

This photograph documented the bathroom after Andreacchio's body had been removed. There was a large area of transfer on the floor. There were no indications from the blood on the floor that the body had been dropped to the floor that would have created impact spatter on the door or wall.



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Crime Scene Photograph 2 (1).jpg:

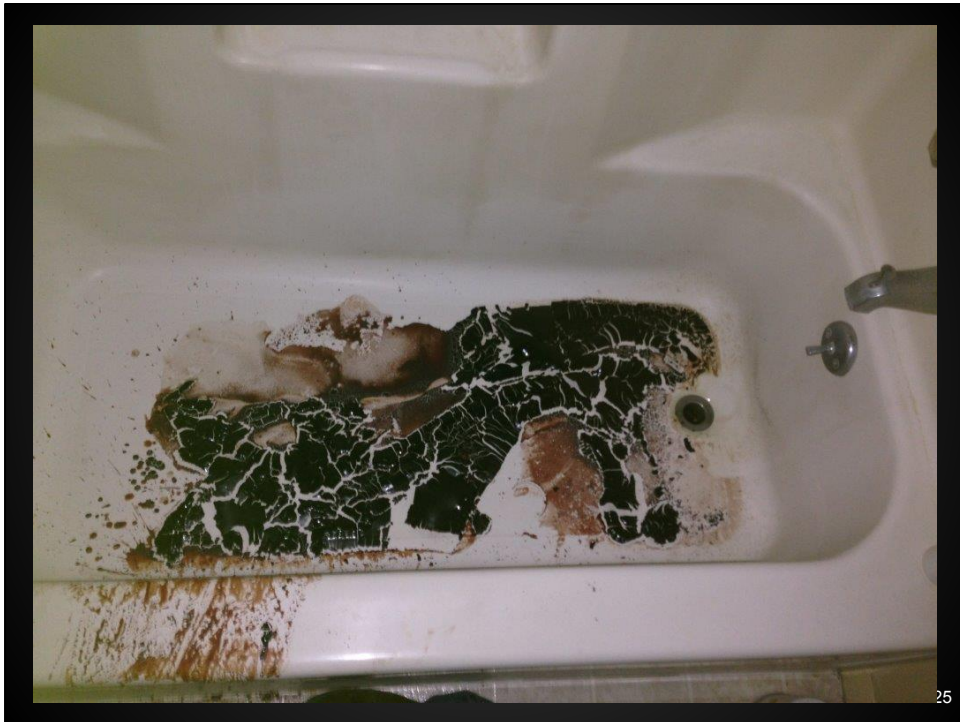
The blood transfer on the bathroom floor did not correspond with the impact spatter on the bathroom wall.



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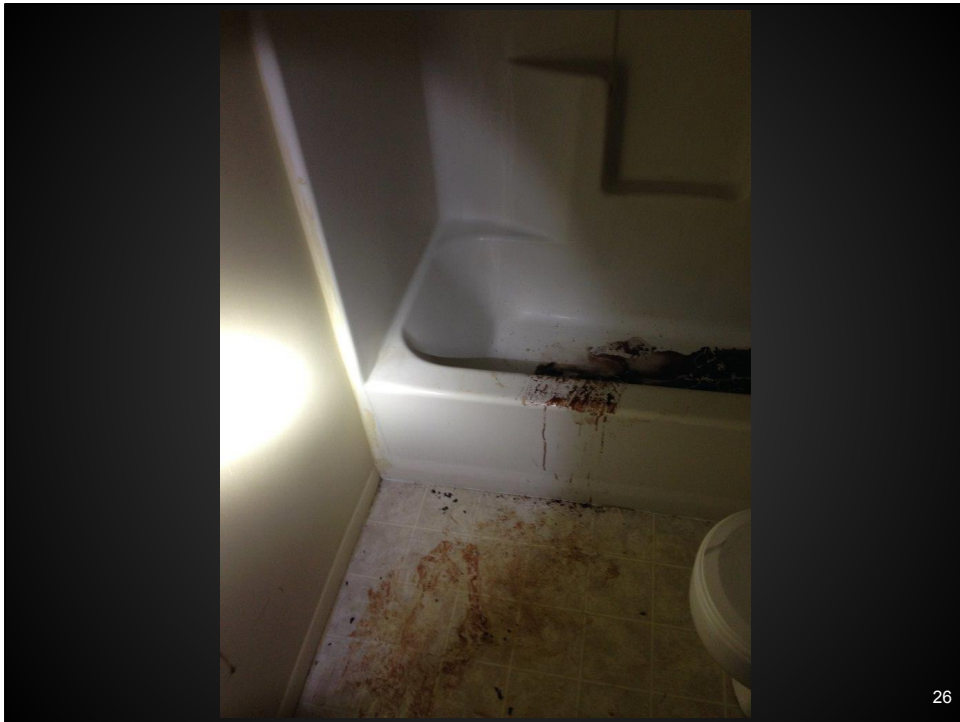
Crime Scene Photograph 13.jpg:

The bathtub after Andreacchio had been removed.



Crime Scene Photograph 2.jpg:

Dripped blood and satellite spatter was present inside the bathtub.



Crime Scene Photograph 3 (2).jpg:

The transfer on the floor was created when Andreacchio's body was removed from the bathtub.

Injuries



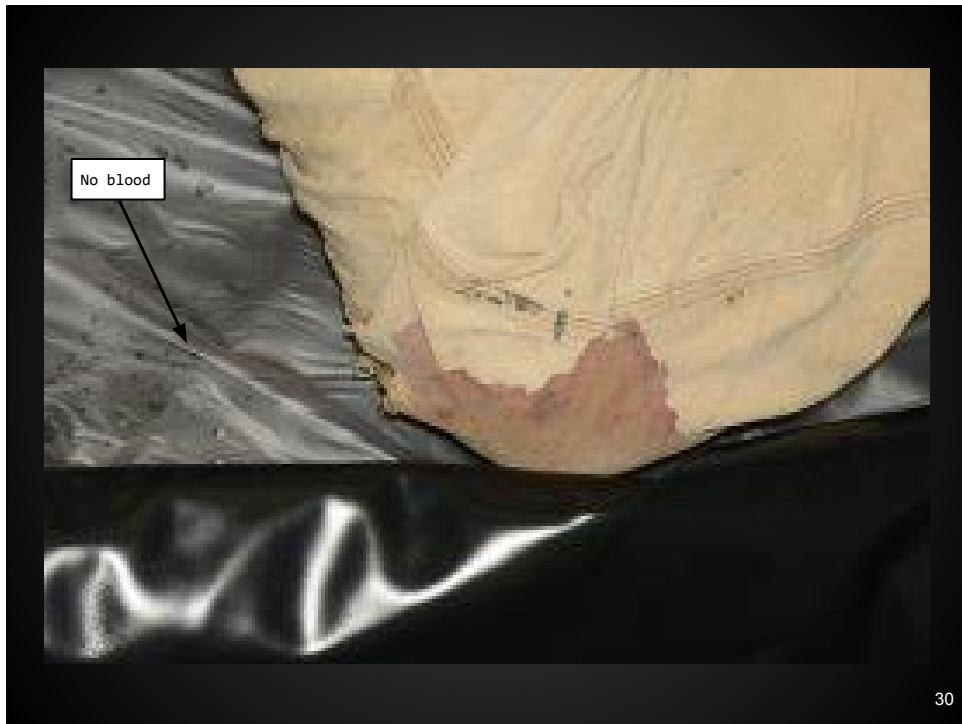
Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (2).jpg:

There appeared to be postmortem lividity present on the front right side, waist. The saturated blood on the blue shirt could have been created while Andreacchio was inside the body bag. The condition of the shirt was never documented immediately after removal from the bathtub.



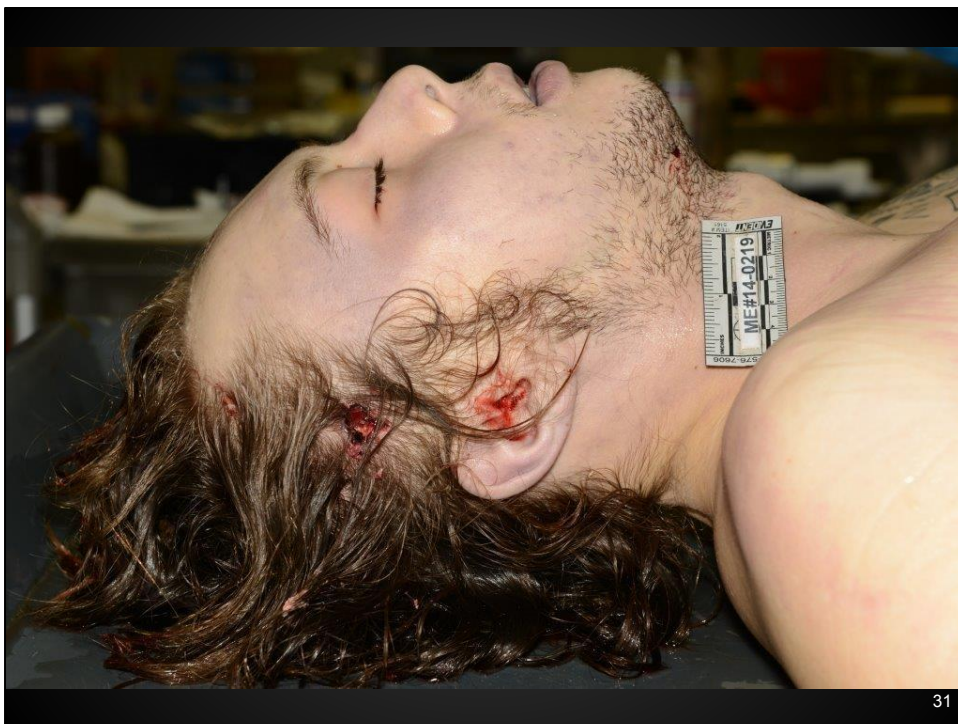
Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (1).jpg:

There was what appeared to be an area of saturated blood on the left knee of Andreacchio's pants. The majority of the blood was around the head and shoulders. The area of saturation on the left knee of the pants is inconsistent with a transfer that occurred during transportation because such a transfer would violate Steno's Principle of Lateral Continuity. The blood transfer to the knee appears to have occurred by some other, unexplained mechanism.



Cropped Image of Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (1).jpg:

This stain indicates that the left knee was in contact with a bloody object or surface for a period of time, enough to result in saturation.



Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (13).jpg:

Christian Andreacchio had a gunshot entrance wound on the right side of the head about 3.25 inches below the top of the head and one inch in front of the auricle. The entrance wound was surrounded by a marginal abrasion and marginal lacerations and there was soot present on the edges of the wound (**Report of Autopsy Examination, p. 3**).



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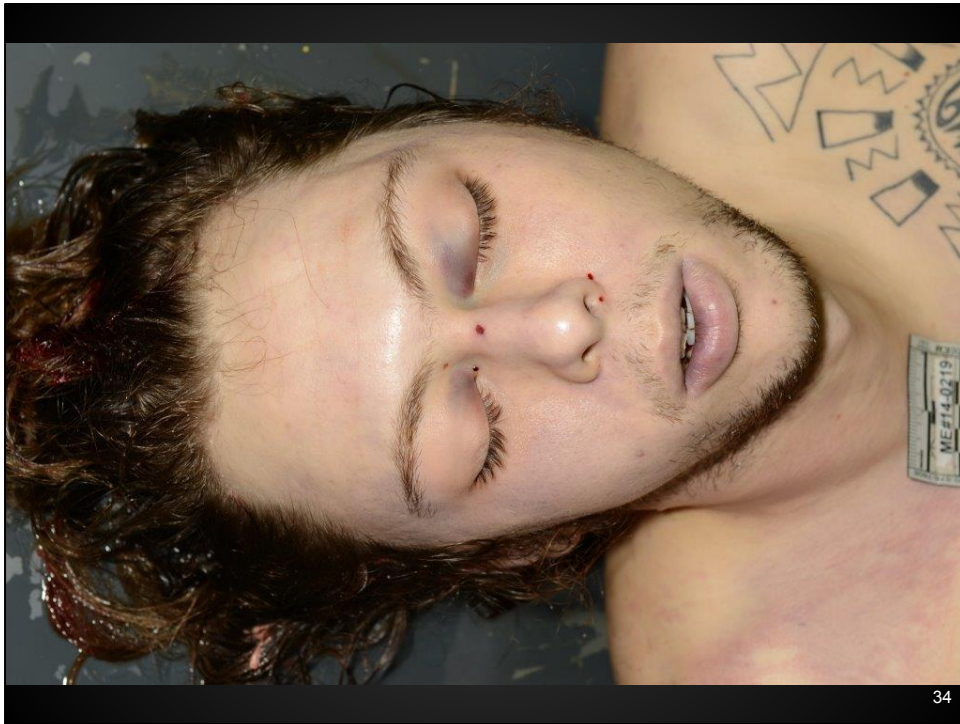
Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (17).jpg:

Just in front of the entrance wound there was a circular 0.25 inch in diameter abrasion with laceration. The wound track was through the soft tissue of the head, right temporal bone with soot being present on the external plate of the skull surrounding the entrance wound, the right temporal bone, the right temporal lobe, the brainstem, left temporal lobe and left temporal bone (**Report of Autopsy Examination, p. 3**).



Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (20).jpg:

There was an irregular and stellate shaped exit wound on the left side of the head. The wound path was right to left, front to back, and without significant deviation upward or downward.



Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (15).jpg:

Andreacchio had an abrasion on the bridge of the nose. It cannot be determined what the other marks are on his face.



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Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (24).jpg:

There was a bloodstain pattern transfer on the lower right back. The impression is undocumented, and no photographs of the lower back were taken at the crime scene. Therefore, it is unknown if this was a transfer from the autopsy table onto the skin or was already present and was created by some other means.



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Cropped Image of Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (24).jpg:

There was no description of this pattern in the autopsy report.



Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (23).jpg:

In addition to the pattern transfer on the back, the back also was void of postmortem lividity.



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Crime Scene Photograph 14-0219 (25).jpg:

There was evidence of postmortem lividity or livor mortis on the back of the right leg. The presence and the location of the lividity was not consistent with the position in which Andreacchio's body was discovered. The lividity indicates that the body had been moved after some postmortem interval.

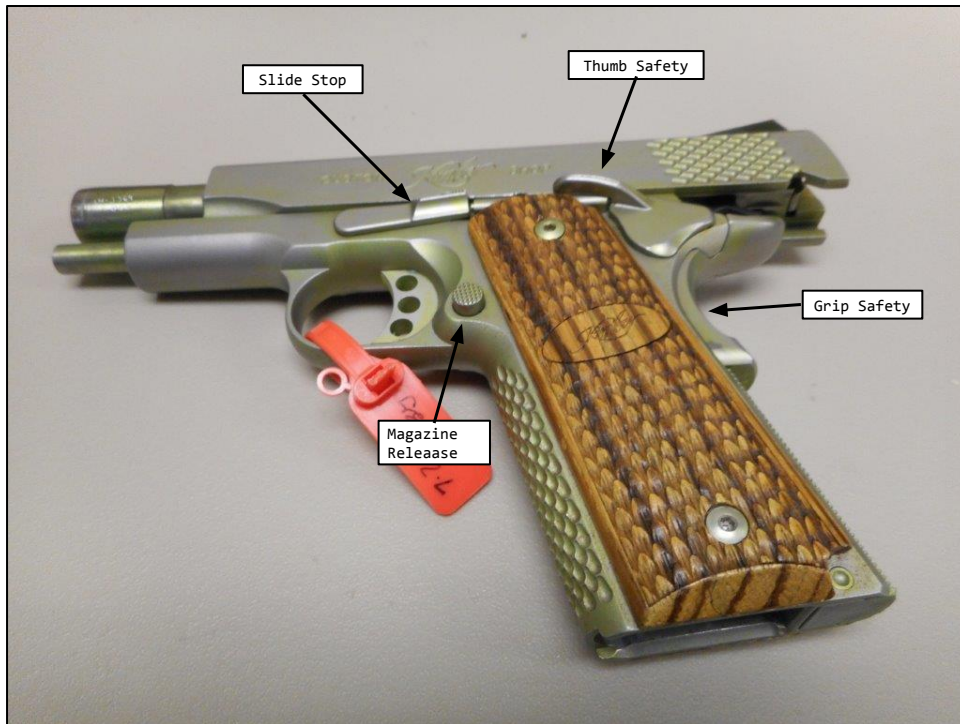
An external examination of Christian Andreacchio was conducted, and the postmortem lividity was described as "red-purple present on the right side as well as anteriorly and is fixed" (Report of Autopsy Examination, p. 2).

Location of the Pistol



Crime Scene Photograph Andreacchio 017.jpg:

A Kimber .45 ACP caliber Raptor II semi-automatic pistol bearing serial number KR136055 was found lying under Andreacchio's body inside the bathtub. There was one live cartridge in the chamber and the magazine contained six live cartridges.



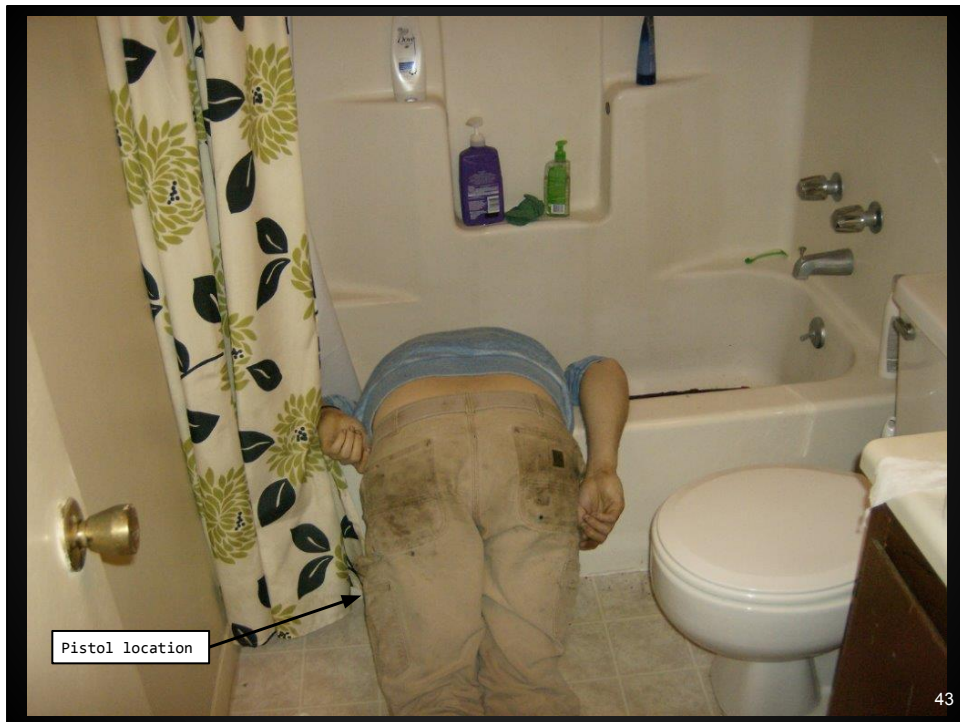
Crime Scene Photograph Andreacchio 025.jpg:

Left side of the pistol.



Crime Scene Photograph Andreacchio 029.jpg:

Back of the pistol.



Crime Scene Photograph 010.jpg:

The pistol was found between the front of the left leg and the exterior side of the bathtub.

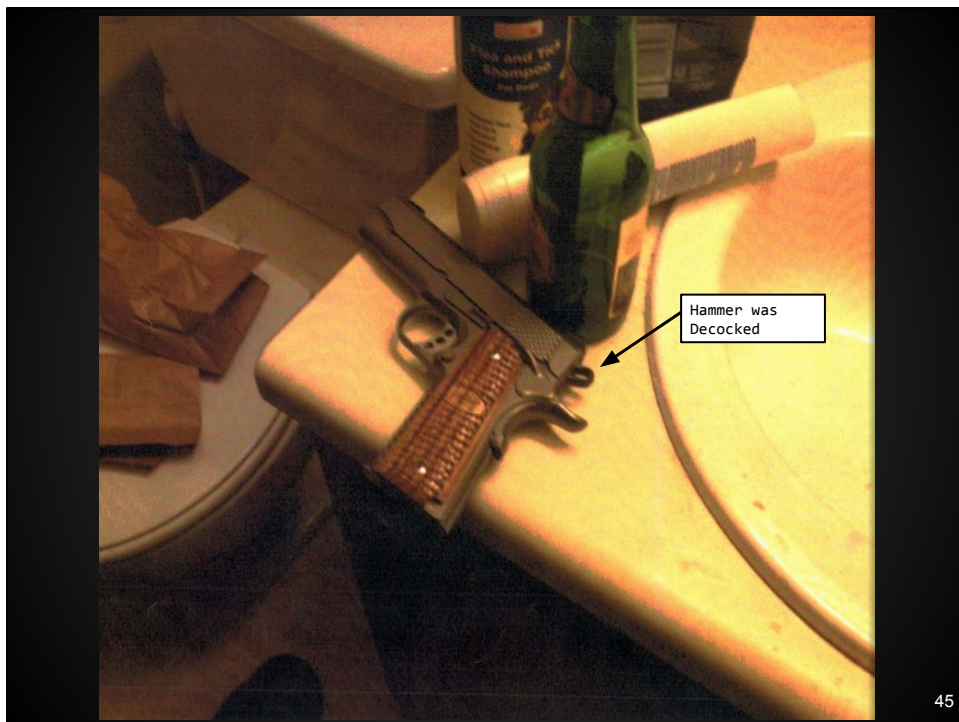
According to the police department, the pistol was found on the left side of Andreacchio between his chest and left arm which were resting on the upper edge of the bathtub and the hammer was “forward” (**MPD Narrative #28, p. 1**). An email received from Meridian Police Department Special Investigator Jerry Bratu clarified the location and the position of the pistol as follows: “The pistol was found pinned between his upper left torso and the side of the bath tub with the barrel pointing towards his upper right side, handle to the left” (Email from Det. Bratu, April 17, 2016, p. 1).

The above statements by investigators in their reports as to the location of the pistol appear to be incorrect. The pistol was actually located on the exterior side of the bathtub under the left hip and in front of the left leg.



PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

The position in which the pistol was found is inconsistent with a self-inflicted gunshot wound scenario because the pistol would either (1) remain in Andreacchio's right hand as he fell to the bathtub or (2) fall from his right hand prior to his body falling. In either scenario, the pistol could not end up pinned between the left side of his body and the tub. Furthermore, there exists no mechanism that would allow for the hammer to decock without firing the chambered cartridge. If the slide cycled and ejected the fired cartridge case, as it apparently did, then the hammer would have necessarily been cocked by the action of the slide. The only way to decock this type of pistol is to drop the hammer by pulling the trigger. This pistol is equipped with a firing pin safety that prohibits forward movement of the firing pin unless the safety is disengaged by rearward movement of the trigger. In the event that the hammer falls without the trigger being pulled, the firing pin safety would prevent discharge. However, the hammer would have to leave the seared position, which is extremely unlikely to occur due to a drop of a short distance as would have occurred if Andreacchio dropped the pistol after shooting himself. (In the suicide scenario, the pistol would not have dropped to a hard surface as it was pinned between the victim's body and the exterior of the bathtub. An examination of the pistol would be necessary to definitively rule out mechanical causes for the hammer to be in the decocked position.)

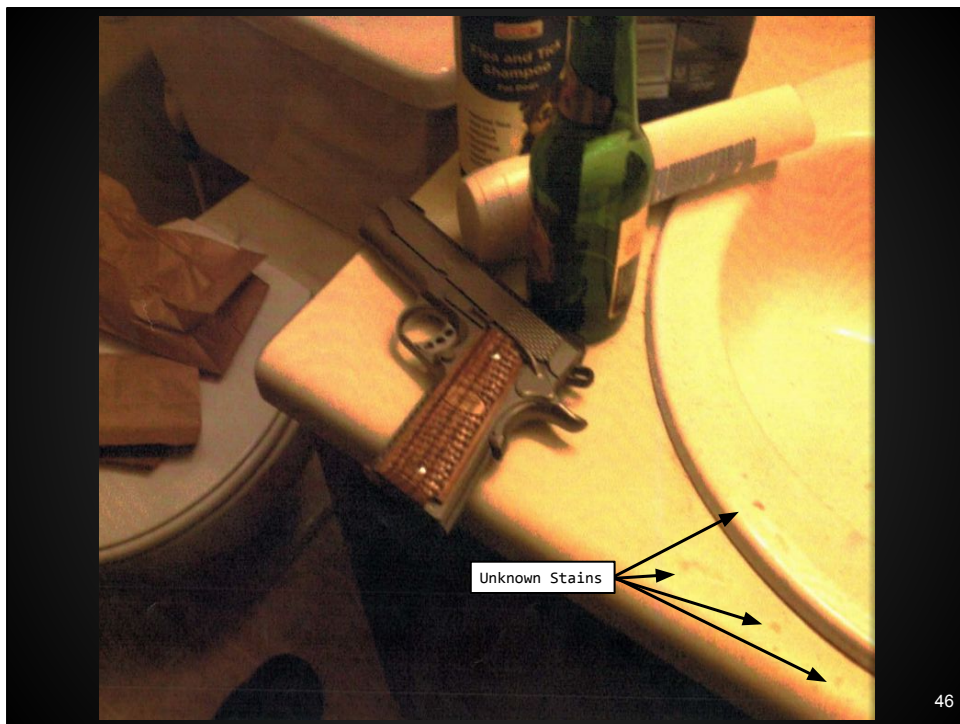


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PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

The pistol was placed on the bathroom sink after removal from under Andreacchio's body. The hammer was not cocked. The butt of the pistol was visible between the bathtub and the deceased (**MPD Narrative #6, p. 1**). The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation told the parents of Andreacchio the position of the pistol's hammer was due to a malfunction of the pistol not reloading itself as designed (**MPD Narrative #28, p. 3**).

Swabs from the handle and magazine produced a partial DNA profile that may be a mixture; however, no further information could be obtained (**Mississippi Crime Lab, DNA Section, September 25, 2014, p. 1**).



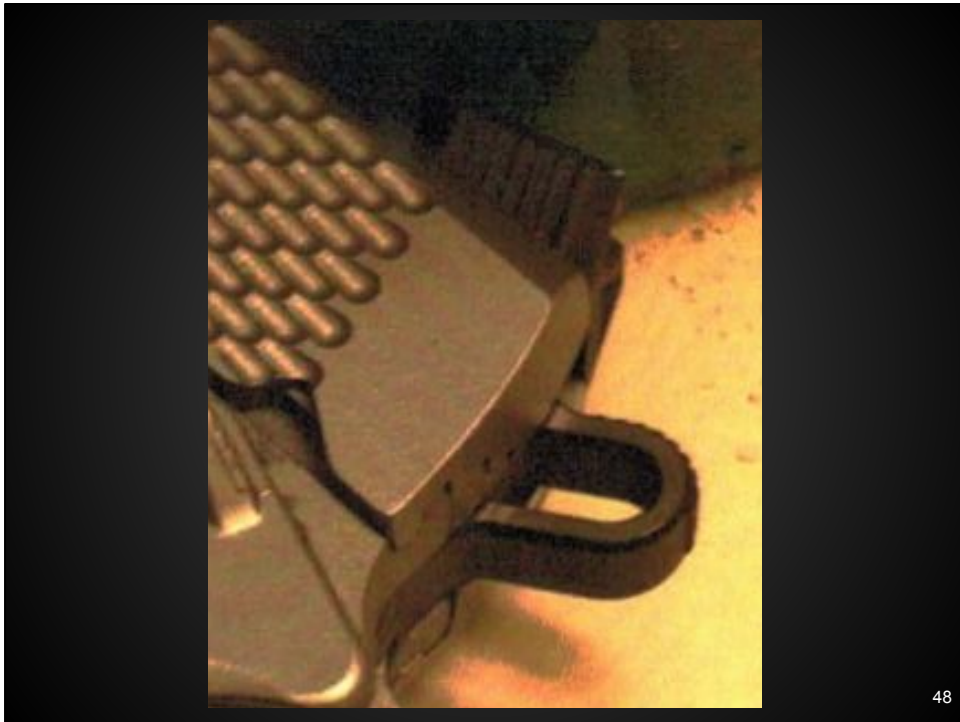
PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

On the front rim of the sink and on the front edge of the vanity were multiple unknown stains. These stains were similar in size and appearance of bloodstains. There were no photographs taken or swabs collected. If the stains were blood, the source remains unknown.



PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

Near the front left corner of the vanity there were multiple unknown stains that were consistent in appearance and size with forward spatter.



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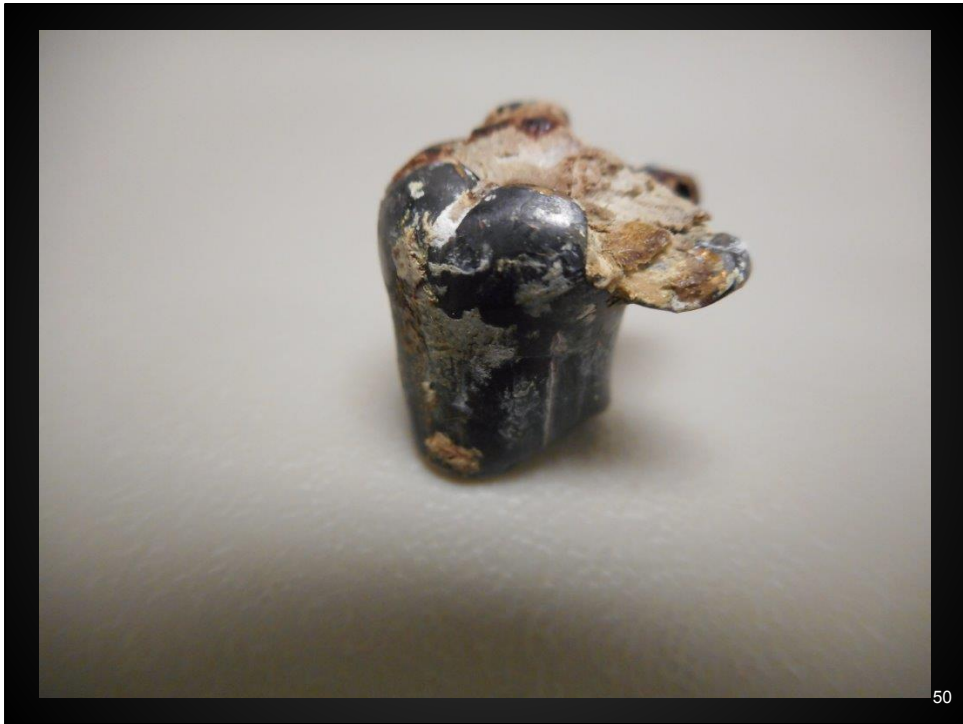
Cropped Image of PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

These stains were not photographed and collected for analysis. The source remains unknown.



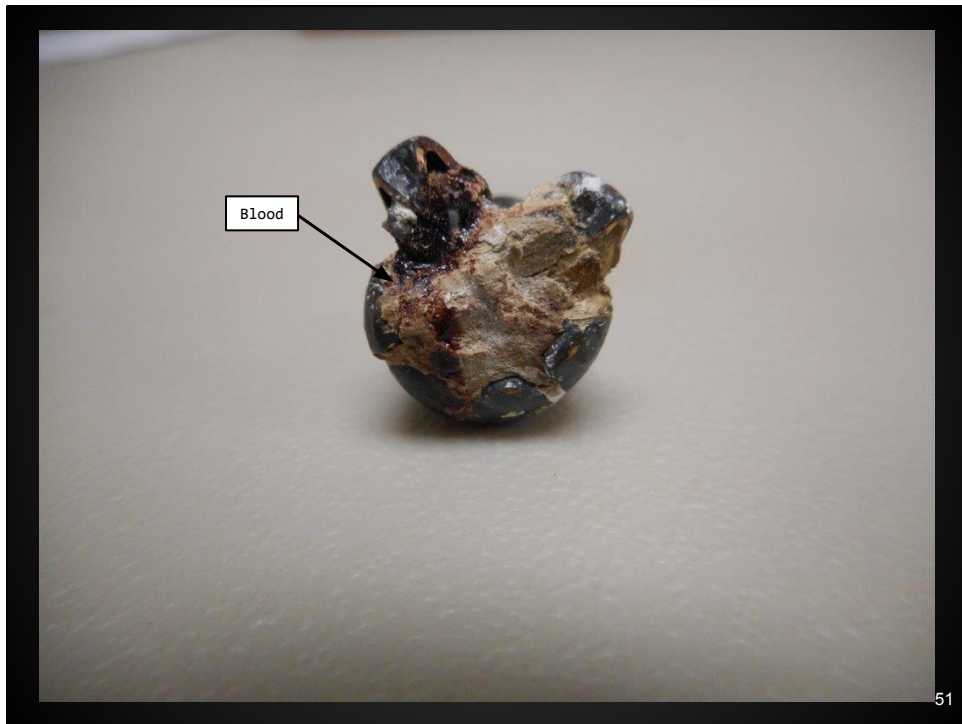
Cropped Image of PDF Copy of Crime Scene Photograph:

These stains were not photographed and collected for analysis. The source remains unknown.



Crime Scene Photograph Andreacchio 012.jpg:

The bullet recovered from the bathtub had a substance embedded in the nose.



Crime Scene Photograph Andreacchio 013.jpg:

One side of the bullet was saturated with blood.



Crime Scene Photograph Andreacchio 015.jpg:

The ejected cartridge case was found inside the bathtub indicating that the pistol action cycled without malfunctioning.

Conclusion

When evaluating an equivocal death case, it is inappropriate to assert a positive outcome: in other words, one must not conclude that a particular outcome occurred to the exclusion of all other possibilities without first eliminating all other possibilities. In this case, the death of Christian Andreacchio could have been the result of either a (1) suicide, (2) homicide, or (3) accident. The latter can be ruled out on the basis of a complete absence of evidence that indicates an accidental manner of death: there is no evidence to support the conclusion that the pistol discharged for any reason other than an intentional pull of the trigger.

The probability that Christian Andreacchio's death was a suicide is remote, for the following reasons: (1) the reported location and position of the pistol is inconsistent with a self-inflicted gunshot wound scenario, but is consistent with having been placed there after Andreacchio's body came to rest; (2) the location of the apparent bullet impact on the wall adjacent to the electrical receptacle does not align with the wound path through Andreacchio's head but instead indicates that his head was facing away from the bathroom mirror when he was shot, a position that is inconsistent with his position of final rest in which his body was facing 90 degrees clockwise from the position he would have been when shot while facing the mirror; (3) there is no impact spatter associated with the gunshot wound documented anywhere in or around the bathtub; (4) there is no dripped blood on the floor outside the bathtub; (5) there is impact spatter consistent with Andreacchio's head being above the level of the sink but below a fully standing attitude when he was shot; (6) there is post-mortem lividity that is inconsistent with his position and attitude at final rest; and, (7) the position of the pistol's hammer (uncocked) cannot be explained under any potential suicide scenario apart from supposition that the hammer position was due to some unexplained, uncorroborated mechanical malfunction, which, as a matter of mechanical engineering, is wholly unsupported by the evidence and by the history and design of the firearm. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of reasons why the probability

of suicide is remote.

While the gunshot wound in and of itself cannot be ruled inconsistent with a self-inflicted gunshot wound, forensically there is no difference between a gunshot wound that is self-inflicted and one that is inflicted by another with the pistol in the same position relative to the body: the two cannot be distinguished in absence of other physical evidence, in particular blood spatter associated with the gunshot wound on the hand of the victim, a matter about which the documentation in this case is agnostic. However, barring some reasonable, scientifically-supported explanation for the blood spatter in other areas of the bathroom and the uncocked pistol hammer, suicide can be excluded as a possible manner of death.

It should be noted that the scope of this analysis involves only physical evidence; no analysis of the investigative, criminological, or victimological evidence in this case has been undertaken by Knox & Associates, LLC. However, in light of my review of the physical evidence in this case, it is my professional opinion that the death of Christian Andreacchio was the result of a homicide.